

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

This Document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, Sections 793 and 794, of the U.S. Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law. The reproduction of this form is prohibited.

SECRET

25X1A

COUNTRY	USSR (Far East)	REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]
SUBJECT	Soviet Military, Economic, and Transportation Activity in the Soviet Far East	DATE DISTR.	13 May 1954
DATE OF INFO.	[REDACTED] 25X1A	NO. OF PAGES	4
PLACE ACQUIRED	[REDACTED]	REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
		REFERENCES	

633520

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

25X1X

Military Activity

- 25X1X 1. In 1948, while in Khabarovsk, [REDACTED] rumors of movements of several air divisions toward the Chukotskiy Peninsula. The air divisions (aviatsionnye diviziony) were allegedly full-strength and included normal complements of support troops in addition to the regular flight personnel. Source saw evidence of this by the large number of Soviet air personnel moving eastward through Khabarovsk. Again, in 1950, [REDACTED] Soviet Army major that an eastward displacement of air personnel was in progress. The size of this movement and other details are unknown to source. 25X1X
- 25X1X 2. Source heard [REDACTED] that the airfields built in the Kolyma district to receive lend-lease goods during World War II were still used as Soviet military airfields. Further details are unknown to source. 25X1X
- 25X1X 3. In June 1950, source learned, [REDACTED] that heavy construction of military installations was then in progress in the Yakutsk area, and that these installations included unidentified air facilities. 25X1X
4. During the 1948 May Day parade in Khabarovsk, [REDACTED] 10 to 15 T-34 tanks, truck-drawn medium artillery, and jeeps passing along one of the main streets of the city. In addition to the artillery and armor, there was a platoon or two representing an OC school, an infantry battalion, and an engineer detachment. Source believes that these units, less the OCS contingent, represented a line division then stationed in the city. 25X1X

SECRET

STATE	X	ARMY	X	NAVY	X	AIR	X	FBI		AEC					
-------	---	------	---	------	---	-----	---	-----	--	-----	--	--	--	--	--

(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X"; Field Distribution By "#".)

-2-

5. In 1948, source observed the eastward movement of materiel through Khabarovsk. The materiel was usually in boxcars, or covered by tarpaulins, and only motor torpedo boats could be positively identified. Source does not remember observing a single troop movement through Khabarovsk.

25X1X 25X1X 6. [REDACTED] source learned, in 1950, that the USSR has a "powerful" submarine fleet in the Far East but that there were then insufficient surface units attached to the Soviet naval fleet in the Far East. Source has no additional information on Soviet naval order of battle in the Far East.

7. During World War II, many Soviet officials in Moscow expressed concern over the strategic vulnerability of the northeastern corner of Siberia, particularly over the exposure of the Kolyma Basin to Japanese attack through the Sea of Okhotsk.

8. Source has no information on early warning and GCI equipment, units, personnel, or their disposition in the Soviet Far East.

9. Source knows that Soviet vigilance, including border patrols, over the northeastern coastlines was increased during the period 1948-1950. However, assignments in the northeast were unpopular and personnel for such billets were difficult to find. MVD personnel received assignments in the northern areas by way of punishment. According to source, the remnants of the old staffs of Yezhov and Yagoda have been exiled permanently to these remote spots. Source believes that the deployment of the MVD internal forces in these regions was thin and weak. Personnel sent to this area for reasons other than punitive received two years of service credit for each year actively served in the area.

10. In 1948, source heard rumors that two capital ships were built at the shipbuilding yards in Komsomolsk. These ships were either both cruisers, or one a cruiser and the other a battleship.

Transportation Conditions

25X1X 11. The roads in and out of the Khabarovsk area were classified as military highways. The best surfaced road that source observed in the Soviet Far East was located near the Zavityaya (N 50-07, E 129-24) railway station, about 40 km. from Khabarovsk. Source believes that the road ran northward from Zavityaya. The road from Khabarovsk to Vladivostok was described to source [REDACTED] as being "very good and very pleasant to drive on".

12. The usual road in the Soviet Far East was unimproved (gruntovyye dorogi), of clay surface. The military roads were constantly graded and were in good condition. A hard-top road was unusual in the Far East; the better roads, whether surfaced or unsurfaced, were high-crowned.

13. The cost of highway maintenance was extremely high and no effort was made to keep the typical city streets in good condition. For example, in downtown Khabarovsk, only two or three of the principal streets were asphalt surfaced. The remainder of the streets and avenues were not only unsurfaced but were also very poorly kept. This was particularly true of the suburban areas. In winter, the street surfaces were frozen. There was little snow in Khabarovsk during the winter; what there was remained uncleared. In Vladivostok snow presented no problem as it rains throughout much of the winter. Source stated that, as of 1950, the dockside road along the harbor in the main port area was in good condition, although source does not remember the type of surface.

SECRET

SECRET

-3-

14. The only truck traffic source observed was Studebaker 6 x 6 trucks in the vicinity of Khabarovsk. Source stated that, as of 1948, there was no civilian truck traffic between Vladivostok and Khabarovsk.
15. As of 1948, there were several army construction battalions deployed in Khabarovsk and its immediate environs. Some of these troops were railway construction personnel. Source learned from the commissioner of a regional conscription office (voyenkomat) that the personnel selected for the construction battalions come from "unproletarian" backgrounds. Their lot was an unhappy one, as the work was hard and the hours were long.

Economic Information

16. The only economic value source ascribed to the northeast part of the Soviet Far East was the mining of gold, uranium ore, and copper, and fur trapping. However, source has no details on any of these subjects.
17. A large distillery located at Khoŕ Station (N 47-53, E 134-57), near Khabarovsk, manufactured a synthetic vodka from sawdust (sic). The quality of the beverage was inferior, and many people would not drink it for fear of blindness. This alcohol can also be used in artillery hydraulic brakes. Source has no information on any other product made at this distillery.

Prison Camps and Forced Labor

18. There were many prison camps in and about Khabarovsk. There were no political prisoners in Khabarovsk, as these were interned in the Arctic.
19. Prisoners in Khabarovsk were employed in the construction of roads and buildings, and in the production of such consumer goods as shoes and clothing. Such products were sold for profit.
20. [REDACTED] a prison in Khabarovsk in which a shoe shop employing prison labor was located. The shoes produced here were commercially sold on the normal consumers' market. [REDACTED] the wife of Nazarov (fnu), First Secretary of the Communist Party of Khabarovskiy Kray. Mrs. Nazarova was visiting the prison for the purpose of ordering shoes for herself. Although this practice was illegal, source claims it was a common practice of the Communist Party hierarchy to exploit prison labor for personal gain. Source stated that Nazarov was later discharged from his position as a result of the many big mistakes he made in agriculture (sic); however, source has no information on the alleged mistakes.
21. Prisoners in Khabarovsk were not heavily guarded. They were interned behind barbed wire, which was reinforced by watchtowers and guards armed with rifles and FPSs. Living conditions of the prisoners were very poor; they were dressed in rags, and were poorly fed.

Black Cat Society

22. The Black Cat Society, a somewhat disorganized bandit and gangster organization, continues to be active in Soviet Far Eastern cities. Source heard, [REDACTED] that the Black Cat Society engaged in robbery and murder in certain sections of the city, and in Vladivostok, Chita, and on Sakhalin Island. One of source's friends told him that he had seen a member of the Black Cat Society publicly executed in the streets of Khabarovsk. Source tended to disbelieve this story, and attributed it chiefly to his informant's boastfulness. Source's own opinion of this organization is that it is small and ineffective, and that its activities do not present the militia with a major criminal problem, although in the period 1935-1940 it was large and drew many young

SECRET

-4-

members. Source stated that organized crime, as such, was not a problem in the Soviet Far East.

Soviet Minority Nationalities in the Far East

23. The Soviets exploited certain native minorities in the far northern areas of the Soviet Far East, such as the Eskimos, Kamchadals, Koryaks, and Chukchi. This exploitation was primarily of the fur-hunting and trading elements of these minorities, in that the Soviets purchased luxury furs from these people at prices far below the normal market value of the furs. Source doubts that these minority elements were aware of this exploitation, as they were inexperienced in the ways of civilization. No acts of subversion against the Soviets have been committed by these elements, to source's knowledge.
24. These minority elements of the Soviet Far East have the legal right to own and carry weapons for the purpose of hunting. However, ammunition is very expensive in the area.
25. Source considers it unlikely that any member of these native minorities would be accepted for membership in the Communist Party, as the Soviets have low regard for the level of intelligence of these people.

SECRET

25X1X